Title II, Part A
Clarification

The Michigan Department of Education, Office of School Improvement, Field Services Unit recently clarified several questions about Title II, Part A with the U. S. Department of Education. Below you will find a summary of this direction.

1. The primary intent of Title II, Part A is to increase student achievement using these funds to support strategies for improving teacher and principal quality by increasing the number of highly qualified teachers in the classroom and by increasing the number of highly qualified principals and assistant principals in the schools.

2. The strategies proposed (using Title II, Part A funding) must be based upon a "needs assessment." MDE will have a comprehensive needs assessment available to assist schools within this academic year. Currently, schools may contact their ISD or Field Services consultant to identify an acceptable needs assessment tool. Use of the MDE needs assessment will be required to apply for federal grants next year. A summary of findings from the needs assessment will need to be included in next year's grant application. The model MDE needs assessment will be based, in part, on the School Improvement Framework.

3. Title II, Part A must be used first to assure that all teachers of core subjects are highly qualified.

4. Title II, Part A may be used to recruit or retain HQ teachers in high needs schools.

5. Title II, Part A may be used to pay the incentives or bonuses of HQ teachers to serve the most needy students, or to pay the salaries of master teachers who provide or coordinate professional development services for other teachers.

6. While Title II, Part A allows the use of these funds to pay for mentoring of first year teachers, Michigan school code requires new teachers to have mentors, and therefore, using Title II, Part A for this purpose in Michigan would be supplanting a state requirement.
   Title II, Part A funds cannot be used for mentoring.

7. Title II, Part A can be used for class size reduction when hiring a HQT to reduce class size based upon scientific research. Scientific research says that class size reduction is most effective in the following circumstances:
   a) primarily in early grades (K-3),
   b) when class size is reduced to 17 or less,
   c) with high risk students,
   d) for a sustained period of time, and
   e) when instructional strategies are adjusted to maximize learning in small classes.

8. The Federal guidance gives several examples of class size reduction. Click on the link for “Improving Teacher Quality” October 2006 at the following web site: http://www.ed.gov/policy/elsec/guid/edpicks.jhtml?src=ln
   - Having two highly qualified teachers team teach in a single classroom for either part of the school day or the entire day.

   - Hiring an additional highly qualified teacher for a grade level (e.g., providing three teachers for two 3rd grade classes) and dividing the students among the teachers for sustained periods of instruction each day in core academic subjects, such as reading and math.

   - Hiring an additional highly qualified teacher who works with half the students in a class for reading or math instruction, while the other half remains with the regular classroom teacher.

Questions:

Q1. Is MDE going to require that class size reduction be used only in K-3, or can a district provide rationale backed by data to use it in higher grades? And how high? And if so, what kind of data?

A1. Title II, Part A will be allowed to be used beyond K-3 as long as there is documented long-term evidence that this reduction has increased student achievement. “Long-term” evidence is defined as 3 consecutive years of achievement increases using statewide assessment documentation to support the claim.

Q2. Is MDE going to require the class size to be 17 or less, or are we going to go by the old guidelines under class size reduction with 20 or less or some other number? If so, what number?

A2. Classes must be reduced to 17 or less. Do not use contractual class size as the basis for this decision as it varies widely across the state and the class size specified in contracts has little relation to evidence of effectiveness in the scientific literature.

The class size reduction must occur at least in the traditional 90-minute block for reading and/or math over the course of a school year.

Q3. How do schools show that students are high risk?

A3. To use Title II, Part A funds for class size reduction a high proportion of the students should be academically high risk. (Note: Class size reduction is also a strategy that can be funded thru Title I if used in a schoolwide building.)

Q4. What does sustained over time mean? Does it include same class over multiple years?

A4. Sustained over time means that the class size is reduced for the cohort student group for two years or more.

Q5. Is professional development on small class size instructional strategies required?

A5. One indicator that appropriate instructional strategies are being used for small class size is that professional development on this topic occurred.